

Q & A from March 6, 2012 Superintendents' Webcast

Question: Please explain the impact the changes have on current SIG Tier 3 schools.

Answer: Previously, we had Tier I and Tier II. Tier I were schools that were in the lowest performing 5%; Tier II schools were non-Title I schools but they were Title I-eligible in the bottom 5%; Tier III were those that were not quite in the bottom 5% but had not yet met their AYP for a number of years and KDE had to prioritize those schools. If you got Tier III dollars, you get to keep them and finish out the three-year cycle. Of those schools that were identified this past fall as persistently low-achieving schools (19), six had formerly been Tier III, and will have to turn the money from Tier III into a school improvement grant focus, which means they will have to be looking at providing a full-time math coach, full-time literacy coach and/or some principal coaching. It is best to eliminate Tier III from our terminology moving forward because it will no longer exist.

If your persistently low-achieving school was identified this year and you were a Tier III, you have to use that money for a very specified purpose. For the thirteen schools that were identified this year that were not Tier III, we will be looking to provide you money through the flexibility and the waiver we've been granted. We've also asked the General Assembly for dollars to support you because there are no federal dollars for SIG schools for this year.

Question: Could you please clarify Title II-A funds a little more and can this grant still be used for teacher positions?

Answer: It may certainly still be used for class size reduction. I would strongly encourage you to read the U.S. Department of Education's new Respect program for future grants. It is our intent to follow the guidance from the U.S. Department of Education that these dollars should be moved to develop the new teacher effectiveness and evaluation system. I met with the Superintendents Advisory Council and I encouraged them to look at how they are currently using Title II dollars and what they are currently spending to support teachers. Many of you are using coaches, lead teachers, and curriculum coaches, and these are appropriate expenditures moving forward with Title II. We are anticipating, whether Congress acts or not, that the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) is going to repurpose dollars to focus on teacher effectiveness and principal effectiveness. So, yes you can continue to use these dollars for teacher positions until notification by USDOE of a change, but I would caution you to look on the horizon and maybe start switching your class size reduction with your coaching that you paid for from other pots of money. The Title II office, Michael Dailey and his team, can help you with this.

Question: If the district is not going to offer the SES services, should schools be mandated to provide afterschool tutoring in reading and consistently monitoring student progress, and if so, will funds be allocated from school improvement funds for those schools?

Answer: The waiver flexibility makes offering SES a local district decision. If you have a Focus School, which means you're in the bottom in performance and have large achievement gaps, then

you're identified in Year 1 and have to put your plan out using the ASSIST software. The ASSIST software will have very specific closing the gap goals that are measurable and they will be monitored by the district for the first three years, and then after the third year that's when KDE will get much more involved in the monitoring the progress. So, it will certainly make sense that schools and districts work together to determine how best to provide support to students. But again, the bottom line on this waiver is these are local district decisions.

Question: It sounds like there will no longer be requirements for a highly qualified teacher corrective action plan. Will there still be a requirement to submit the annual report for highly qualified status for all schools?

Answer: Yes, on both of those. There's no longer a requirement for the HQ corrective action plan. We do have to report the numbers to USDOE until Congress acts on ESEA reauthorization. So, you have to report HQT numbers but if you don't make the goals, you don't have to write a plan, we don't have to approve a plan and we don't have to provide technical assistance.

Question: We seem to have multiple school district improvement plans. Will we ever get to the point where we have only one improvement plan for each school and one for each district?

Answer: As a matter of fact for the 2012-13 school year, there will be one plan. If you use the ASSIST software, you can get by with one plan; if you don't use the ASSIST software, then you may have to submit multiple plans. So, we're going to provide you with the ASSIST software free of charge. We'll be having multiple opportunities for training. Those of you who are Priority and Focus Schools will be required to use ASSIST so we can monitor your plans. But, not only are we consolidating into one planning process, we're also consolidating into one audit process. We've been piloting this spring a comprehensive audit to our school districts and that's what we're going to do moving forward. So, you'll have one random audit and when we come to audit, we'll audit everything. That's what we're implementing in 2013 and beyond.

Question: We are in the first year of improvement and we have a set-aside in Title I at the school and district level. Is there any flexibility right now with these funds?

Answer: No, you have to complete the 2011-12 school year under the old rules, but should you have funds leftover at the end of the fiscal year, you can transition those funds back into Title I-A for the future. Remember the federal fiscal year and state fiscal year are two different fiscal years, so don't get caught off-guard as to when you have to spend federal dollars. Typically that means funds must be committed by September 30.

Question: Will this waiver affect our RLIS funds and will transfer of these funds be possible to Title I?

Answer: You've got 100% flexibility to move those funds.

Question: You said that districts are no longer required to set aside deferred funds for implementing corrective action plans. Does this mean any current funds that are in that category can be used in another manner as long as it follows Title I guidelines this year?

Answer: You must this year follow the old rules for the purpose for which you set aside those funds for corrective action; however, if you have dollars left over in that line item, you may move those dollars as long as you commit those dollars by September 30.

Question: We were a Cohort 2 school with SIG money. Will that money continue for the next two years?

Answer: That money will continue for one more year. You're only guaranteed two years. We've asked the General Assembly for funds to continue supporting turnaround schools. I would encourage you to talk with your local senators and local representatives because we have asked for about \$6 million to support low-achieving schools in this turnaround effort.

Question: With the changes in these funds, when will we get updates on amounts? Also, has there been anything sent out about Read to Achieve and math grants?

Answer: We will know more on Read to Achieve and math grants once we get the House's budget. Then, it will go to the Senate. The Governor's budget basically cut those programs across the board by 4 ½%, so if I was a budgeting person I would budget the Read to Achieve and math funds at a 4 ½% reduction. We will get you a side-by-side comparison of the Governor's budget, KDE's request and the House's budget hopefully next week.

As far as an update on federal fund amounts, we will provide this once we get it from USDOE as we do not have a tentative budget for the next year.

Question: Could you elaborate on the possible uses of the 21st Century funds during the day?

Answer: Probably not because we want to rely on the creativity of our 21st Century providers and school districts to look at all of the pots of money you have available. I would strongly encourage you to look at your flexibility within Title I and Title II and look at flexibility of increasing support for your 21st Century programs. But we will get you out some general guidance on that in the coming weeks. I think it's pretty much going to be left up to the creativity of the 21st Century providers and school districts to come up with programs that will impact student learning.

Question: How many hours will the principal observers' certification training be, also is \$400 per person the fee and will you have to do the training each year?

Answer: The answers to most of those questions are still being worked on with the field test districts. We do anticipate the training to be online; it's very similar to what's being done with the MET project through the Charlotte Danielson framework and partnership with several school districts across the nation. The numbers we're seeing are anywhere from 40-50 hours, but those

details are yet to come. We're just wanting you to put that on your radar screen and we will get more details to you when the time comes.

Question: Is there any additional flexibility in regard to the Title I, Part 1 funds carried over from the previous year?

Answer: The same rules apply for the carry-over funds as in the past.

Question: We are a district in corrective action. Can we still spend Title I funds on non-Title I schools in the 2012-13 school year?

Answer: No, Title I dollars must be spent on Title I schools. There's a lot of ways you can move dollars around, and our finance people can help you with that.

Question: Even though we are not required to put 10% aside for districts that are formerly known as 'in improvement', if we do decide to continue this practice, can the funds still be spent on professional development for all schools in the district and not just the Title I schools?

Answer: You can still put 10% aside for professional development; that's a local decision. However, funds being spent for professional development need to focus in on Title I schools because typically that is where you have the challenge of the achievement gap group.

Question: Will the 'hold harmless' percentage recently given still apply or will the SEA be taking away more money we were anticipating to use to fund the Priority or Focus Schools?

Answer: There is no impact on the 'hold harmless'.

Question: I see in one of the slides that Title II dollars can be used to support principal observer certification in 2013-14. Have we moved the go-live date back for principal effectiveness to the 2014-15 school year?

Answer: Yes, we have. The timeline on the field test of a few multiple measures is this spring and the full field test will be for the 2012-13 school year. The statewide pilot will be in 2013-14 and 2014-15 is the go-live date of our new teacher/principal effectiveness system where districts will have to choose whether to use the state system or create their own for approval by KDE.

Question: Any more information regarding what we should expect in terms of budget cuts to Title I, Title II, or ESS?

Answer: As far as we know the continuation resolution did not have any significant reductions to Title I. As a matter of fact, I think we got just a little bit more. The President just introduced his budget for FY13 that did have a significant increase in teacher effectiveness for a large grant program called Respect and his jobs act. We'll see what happens.

Question: Based on the changes outlined in the PowerPoint about the new uses of the Title monies, is it safe to say if we are not a district under the new guidelines, we can expect cuts?

Answer: We're not expecting any cuts. The formula for the Title I allocation has not changed. It will continue until we get a new federal budget.

Question: Do you know if the Governor's budget still has the language in it that if there is any type of surplus at the state level, 50% of that surplus will be returned to the school districts in the form of an additional SEEK payment?

Answer: Yes, nothing has changed about the Governor's budget. Now we'll see what the House budget says.

Question: Can Title I funds be transferred to 21st Century Learning grants?

Answer: Title I A funds cannot be transferred and you can't transfer them to any other purpose. But, you could transfer Title IIA (teacher quality) and Title IID (technology).

Question: Clarify SES. Do we have to continue the SES or can we stop services now?

Answer: You cannot stop services on anything. That only begins with July 1, 2012. So, you can't change anything from now until the end of the school year. You can only do it at the beginning of the next school year starting July 1, 2012.

Question: Could you explain to me what impact the changes have on current SIG Tier III schools?

Answer: The waiver changes will provide an opportunity for us to identify funding for our new group of SIG schools and require our SIG schools to utilize the ASSIST software for their improvement plans.

Question: How does the waiver impact school improvement funds, not SIG?

Answer: In the very first slide, it shows that the Title I funds, Part A, where 4% was set aside for school improvement funds, will no longer be received unless you're a Priority School or Focus School.